

# Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle

## **TODAY WE SAY: WE ARE HERE, WE ARE REBEL DIGNITY, THE FORGOTTEN OF THE HOMELAND**

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January 1, 1996

"All those communities, all those who work the land, all whom we invite to stand on our side so that together we may give life to one sole struggle, so that we may walk with your help.

We must continue to struggle and not rest until the land is our own, property of the people, of our grandfathers, and that the toes of those who have paws of rocks which have crushed us to the shadow of those who loom over us, who command us; that together we raise with the strength of our heart and our hand held high that beautiful banner of the dignity and freedom of we who work the land. We must continue to struggle until we defeat those who have crowned themselves, those who have helped to take the land from others, those who make much money with the labor of people like us, those who mock us in their estates. That is our obligation of honor, if we want to be called men of honesty and good inhabitants of our communities.

Now then, somehow, more than ever, we need to be united, with all our heart, and all our effort in that great task of marvelous and true unity, of those who began the struggle, who preserve purity in their heart, guard their principles and do not lose faith in a good life.

We beg that those who receive this manifesto pass it on to all the men and women of those communities."

Reform, Liberty, Justice and Law Chief General of the Southern Liberation Army  
Emiliano Zapata (original Zapatista manifesto written in Nahuatl)

# I

**TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO: TO THE PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD: BROTHERS AND SISTERS:**

The flower of the word will not die. The masked face which today has a name may die,

but the word which came from the depth of history and the earth can no longer be cut by the arrogance of the powerful. We were born of the night. We live in the night. We will die in her. But the light will be tomorrow for others, for all those who today weep at the night, for those who have been denied the day, for those for whom death is a gift, for those who are denied life. The light will be for all of them. For everyone everything. For us pain and anguish, for us the joy of rebellion, for us a future denied, for us the dignity of insurrection. For us nothing.

Our fight has been to make ourselves heard, and the bad government screams arrogance and closes its ears with its cannons.

Our fight is caused by hunger, and the gifts of the bad government are lead and paper for the stomachs of our children.

Our fight is for a roof over our heads which has dignity, and the bad government destroys our homes and our history.

Our fight is for knowledge, and the bad government distributes ignorance and disdain.

Our fight is for the land, and the bad government gives us cementaries.

Our fight is for a job which is just and dignified, and the bad government buys and sells our bodies and our shames.

Our fight is for life, and the bad government offers death as our future.

Our fight is for respect for our right to sovereignty and self-government, and the bad government imposes laws of the few on the many.

Our fight is for liberty of thought and walk, and the bad government builds jails and graves.

Our fight is for justice, and the bad government consists of criminals and assassins.

Our fight is for history and the bad government proposes to erase history.

Our fight is for the homeland, and the bad government dreams with the flag and the language of foreigners.

Our fight is for peace, and the bad government announces war and destruction.

Housing, land, employment, food, education, independence, democracy, liberty, justice

and peace. These were our banners during the dawn of 1994. These were our demands during that long night of 500 years. These are, today, our necessities.

Our blood and our word have lit a small fire in the mountain and we walk a path against the house of money and the powerful. Brothers and sisters of other races and languages, of other colors, but with the same heart now protect our light and in it they drink of the same fire.

The powerful came to extinguish us with its violent wind, but our light grew in other lights. The rich dream still about extinguishing the first light. It is useless, there are now too many lights and they have all become the first.

The arrogant wish to extinguish a rebellion which they mistakenly believe began in the dawn of 1994. But the rebellion which now has a dark face and an indigenous language was not born today. It spoke before with other languages and in other lands. This rebellion against injustice spoke in many mountains and many histories. It has already spoken in nahuatl, paipai, kiliwa, cucapa, cochimi, kumiai, yuma, seri, chontal, chinanteco, pame, chichimeca, otomi, mazahua, matlatzinca, ocuilteco, zapoteco, solteco, chatino, papabuco, mixteco, cucateco, triqui, amuzgo, mazateco, chocho, ixcaateco, huave, tlapaneco, totonaca, tepehua, popoluca, mixe, zoque, huasteco, lacandon, mayo, chol, tzeltal, tzotzil, tojolabal, mame, teco, ixil, aguacateco, motocintleco, chicomucelteco.

They want to take the land so that our feet have nothing to stand on. They want to take our history so that our word and we will be forgotten and die. They do not want Indians. They want us dead.

The powerful want our silence. When we were silent, we died, without the word we did not exist. We fight against this loss of memory, against death and for life. We fight the fear of a death because we have ceased to exist in memory.

When the homeland speaks its indian heart, it will have dignity and memory.

Brothers and Sisters:

On January 1 of 1995, after breaking the military blockade with which the bad government pretended to submerge us in surrender and isolation, we called upon the different citizen forces to construct a broad opposition front which would unite those democratic voices which exist against the State-Party System: the National Liberation Movement. Although the beginning of this effort at unity encountered many problems, it lives still in the thoughts of those men and women who reject conformity when they see their Homeland under the rule of the Powerful and foreign monies. This broad opposition front, after following a route filled with difficulty, regressions and misunderstandings, is about to concretize its first Proposals and agreements for coordinated action. The long process of maturity of this organizing effort will bear fruit this new year. We Zapatistas, salute the birth of this Movement for National Liberation and we hope that, among those who form it there will always be a zeal for unity and

respect for differences.

Once the dialogue with the supreme government began, the commitment of the EZLN to its search for a political solution to the war begun in 1994 was betrayed. Pretending to want to dialogue, the bad government opted for a cowardly military solution, and with stupid and clumsy arguments, unleashed a great military and police persecution which had as its supreme objective the assassination of the leadership of the EZLN. The armed rebel forces of the EZLN met this attack with serene resistance tolerating the blows of thousands of soldiers assisted by the sophisticated death machinery and technical assistance of foreigners who wanted to end the cry for dignity which came out of the mountains of the Mexican Southeast. An order to retreat allowed the Zapatista forces to conserve their military power, their moral authority, and their political force and historic reason which is the principal weapon against crime made government. The great mobilizations of national and international civil society stopped the treacherous offensive and forced the government to insist upon the path of dialogue and negotiation. Thousands of innocent civilians were taken prisoners by the bad government and still remain in jail utilized as hostages of war by the terrorists who govern us. The federal forces had no other military victory other than the destruction of a library, an auditorium for cultural events, a dance floor and the pillage of the few belongings of the indigenous people of the Lacandon jungle. This murderous attempt was covered up by the governmental lie of *recuperating national sovereignty*.

Ignoring Article 39 of the Constitution which it swore to uphold on December 1, 1994, the supreme government reduced the Mexican Federal Army to the role of an army of occupation. It gave it the task of salvaging the organized crime which has become government, and deployed it to attack its own Mexican brothers.

Meanwhile, the true loss of national sovereignty was concretized in the secret pacts and public economic cabinet with the owners of money and foreign governments. Today, as thousands of federal soldiers harass and provoke a people armed with wooden guns and the word of dignity, the high officials finish selling off the wealth of the great Mexican Nation and destroy the little which was left.

Once it took up that dialogue for peace again, forced by the pressure of international and national civil society, the government delegation once again took the opportunity to demonstrate clearly its true motivation for the peace negotiations. The neo-conquerors of the indigenous people headed by the negotiating team of the government have distinguished themselves by their prepotent attitude, their arrogance, their racism and their constant humiliation which pursues failure after failure in the different sessions of the Dialogue of San Andres. It bet upon the exhaustion and frustration of the Zapatistas, and the government delegation placed all its energies to breaking the dialogue, confident that it would then have all the arguments in its favor for the use of armed force, securing what reason could not secure.

Once the EZLN understood that the government refused to concentrate seriously on the

national conflict which the war represented, it took a peace initiative in an attempt to unravel the dialogue and negotiations. It called civil society to a national and international dialogue in its search for a new peace, it called for the PLEBISCITE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY in order to hear national and international opinion about its demands and future.

With the enthusiastic participation of the members of the NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION, the disinterested volunteerism of thousands of disorganized citizens with democratic hopes, the mobilization of international solidarity groups and groups of young people, and the invaluable help of the brothers and sister of NATIONAL CIVIC ALLIANCE during the months of August and September of 1995 a civic and unprecedented experiment was carried out. Never before in the history of the world or the nation had a peaceful civil society dialogued with a clandestine and armed group. More than a million three hundred thousand dialogues were realized in order to verify this encounter with democratic wills. As a result of this plebiscite, the legitimacy of the Zapatista demands were ratified, a new push was given to the broad opposition front which had become stagnated and clearly expressed the will to see the Zapatistas participating in the civic political life of the country. The massive participation of international civil society called attention to the necessity to construct those spaces where the different aspirations for democratic change could find expression even among the different countries. The EZLN considers the results of this national and international dialogue very serious and will now begin the political and organizational work necessary in order to comply with those messages.

Three new initiatives were launched by the Zapatistas as responses to the success of the PLEBISCITE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY.

An initiative for the international arena expresses itself in a call to carry out an intercontinental dialogue in opposition to neoliberalism. The two other initiatives are of a national character: the formation of civic committees of dialogue whose base is the discussion of the major national problems and which are the seeds of a non-partisan political force; and the construction of the new Aguascalientes as places for encounters between civil society and Zapatismo.

Three months after these three initiatives were launched, the call for the intercontinental dialogue for humanity and against neoliberalism is almost complete, more than two hundred civic committees of dialogue have been organized in all of the Mexican republic, and today, 5 new *Aguascalientes* will be inaugurated: one in the community of La Garrucha, another in Oventic, Morelia, La Realidad, and the first and last one in the hearts of all the honest men and women who live in the world. In the midst of threats and penuries, the indigenous Zapatista communities and civil society have managed to raise these centers of civic and peaceful resistance which will be a gathering place for Mexican culture and cultures of the world.

The new National Dialogue had its first test under the rationale for Discussion Table

Number One in San Andres. While the government discovered its ignorance in regards to the original inhabitants of these lands, the advisors and guests of the EZLN began such a new and rich dialogue that it overwhelmed the limitations of the Discussion Table in San Andres and it had to be re-located to its rightful place: the nation. The indigenous Mexicans, the ones always forced to listen, to obey, to accept, to resign themselves, took the word and spoke the wisdom which is in their walk. The image of the ignorant Indian, pusillanimous and ridiculous, the image which the Powerful had decreed for national consumption, was shattered, and the indigenous pride and dignity returned to history in order to take the place it deserves: that of complete and capable citizens.

Independently of what arises as a result of the first negotiation of the agreements of San Andres, the dialogue begun by the different ethnic groups and their representatives will continue now within the INDIGENOUS NATIONAL FORUM, and it will have its rhythm and achievements which the indigenous people themselves will agree upon and decide.

On the national political scene, the criminality of Salinismo was re-discovered and it destabilized the State-Party System. The apologists for Salinas, who reformed and altered the Constitution now have amnesia and are among the most enthusiastic persecutors of the man under whom they acquired their wealth. The National Action Party, the most faithful ally of Salinas de Gortari, began to demonstrate its real possibilities of replacing the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in the summit of political power and demonstrate its repressive, intolerant and reactionary nature. Those who see hope in the rise of neo-PANism forget that a substitution in a dictatorship is not democracy. They applaud the new inquisition, which through a democratic facade, pretends to sanction with moralistic blows the last remains of a country which was once a world wonder and today provides the material for chronicles of police action and scandals. A constant presence within the exercise of government was repression and impunity; the massacres of indigenous people in Guerrero, Oaxaca, and the Huasteca ratify government policy towards indigenous peoples; the authoritarianism in the UNAM toward the movement of those students wishing to democratize the College of Sciences and Humanities is a manifestation of the corruption which seeps into academia from politics; the detention of the leaders of El Barzon is another manifestation of treachery as a method of dialogue; the bestial repression of the regent Espinoza rehearses street fascism in Mexico City; the reforms to the Social Security law repeat the democratization of misery, and the support for the privatization of the banks secure the unity between the State-Party System and money. These political crimes have no solution because they are committed by those who are supposed to prosecute; the economic crisis makes corruption even more prevalent in government spheres. Government and crime, are today synonymous and equivalent.

While the legal opposition dedicated itself to find the center in a dying nation, large sectors of the population increased their skepticism towards political parties and searched, without finding it still, for an option for new political work, a political

organization of a new kind.

Like a star, the dignified and heroic resistance of the indigenous Zapatista communities illuminated 1995 and wrote a beautiful lesson in Mexican history. In Tepoztlan, in the workers of SUTAU-100, in El Barzon, just to mention a few places and movements, popular resistance found representatives with great dignity.

In summary, 1995 was characterized by the definition of two national projects completely different and contradictory.

On the one hand, the national project of the Powerful, a project which entails the total destruction of the Mexican nation; the negation of its history; the sale of its sovereignty; treachery and crime as supreme values; hypocrisy and deceit as a method of government; destabilization and insecurity as a national program; repression and intolerance as a plan for economic development. This project finds in the PRI its criminal face and in the PAN its pretense of democracy.

On the other hand, the project of a transition to democracy, not a transition within a corrupt system which simulates change in order for everything to remain the same, but the transition to democracy as a reconstruction project for the nation; the defense of national sovereignty; justice and hope as aspirations; truth and government through obedience as a guide for leadership; the stability and security given by democracy and liberty; dialogue, tolerance and inclusion as a new way of making politics. This project must still be created and it will correspond, not to a homogeneous political force or to the geniality of an individual, but to a broad opposition movement capable of gathering the sentiments of the nation.

We are in the midst of a great war which has shaken Mexico at the end of the 20th century. The war between those who intend to perpetuate a social, cultural and political regime which is the equivalent to the crime of treachery to the nation; and those who struggle for a democratic, just, and free change. The Zapatista war is only a part of that great war which is the struggle between a history which aspires for a future and an amnesia which has foreign vocation.

A plural, tolerant, inclusive, democratic, just, free and new society is only possible today, in a new nation. The Powerful will not be the ones to construct it. The Powerful are only the salesmen of the remains of a destroyed country, one devastated by the true subversives and destabilizers: those who govern.

Those projects which belong to the new opposition lack something which today has become decisive. We are opposed to a national project which implies its destruction, but we lack a proposal for a new Nation, a proposal for reconstruction.

Part, but certainly not all its vanguard, has been and is the EZLN in its effort for a transition to democracy. In spite of the persecution and the threats, beyond the lies and deceits, the EZLN has remained legitimate and accountable and forges ahead in its struggle for democracy, liberty and justice for all Mexicans.

Today, the struggle for democracy, liberty and justice in Mexico is a struggle for national liberation.

## II

Today, with heart of Emiliano Zapata and having heard the voice of all our brothers and sisters, we call upon the people of Mexico to participate in a new stage of the struggle for national liberation and the construction of a new nation, through this. . . .

### **FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDON JUNGLE**

in which we call upon all honest men and women to participate in the new national political force which is born today: the

**ZAPATISTA FRONT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION** a civic and peaceful organization, independent and democratic, Mexican and national, which will struggle for democracy, liberty and justice in Mexico. The Zapatista Front of National Liberation is born today and we invite the participation of the workers of the Republic, the workers in the field and in the city, the indigenous people, the squatters, the teachers and students, Mexican women, the youth in all the nation, honest artists and intellectuals, religious people who are accountable, all those Mexican citizens who do not want Power but democracy, liberty, and justice for ourselves and for our children.

We invite national civic society, those without a party, the citizen and social movement, all Mexicans to construct this new political force.

A new political force which will be national. A new political force based in the EZLN.

A new political force which forms part of a broad opposition movement, the National Liberation Movement, as a space for citizen political action where there may be a confluence with other political forces of the independent opposition, a space where popular wills may encounter and coordinate united actions with one another.

A political force whose members do not exert nor aspire to hold elective positions or government offices in any of its levels. A political force which does not aspire to take power. A force which is not a political party.

A political force which can organize the demands and proposals of those citizens and is willing to give direction through obedience. A political force which can organize a solution to the collective problems without the intervention of political parties and of the government. We do not need permission in order to be free. The role of the government is the prerogative of society and it is its right to exert that function.

A political force which struggles against the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and against the centralization of power. A political force whose members do not have any other privilege than the satisfaction of having fulfilled its commitment.

A political force with local, state and regional organization which grows from the base, which is its social force. A political force given birth by the civic committees of dialogue.

A political force which is called a FRONT because it incorporates organizational efforts which are non-partisan, and has many levels of participation and many forms of struggle.

A political force called ZAPATISTA because it is born with the hope and the indigenous heart which, together with the EZLN, descended again from the Mexican mountains.

A political force with a program of struggle with 13 points. Those contained in the First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle and added throughout the past two years of insurgency. A political force which struggles against the State-Party System. A political force which struggles for a new constituency and a new constitution. A political force which does not struggle to take political power but for a democracy where those who govern, govern by obeying.

We call upon all those men and women of Mexico, the indigenous and those who are not indigenous, we call upon all the peoples who form this Nation; upon those who agree to struggle for housing, land, work, bread, health, education, information, culture, independence, democracy, justice, liberty and peace; to those who understand that the State-Party System is the main obstacle to a transition to democracy in Mexico; to those who know that democracy does not mean substituting those in absolute power but government of the people, for the people and by the people; for those who agree with the need to create a new Magna Carta which incorporates the principal demands of the Mexican people and the guarantees that Article 39 be complied with through plebiscites and referendums; to those who do not aspire or pretend to exercise public privileges or elected posts; to those who have the heart, the will and the wisdom on the left side of their chest; to those who want to stop being spectators and are willing to go without pay or privilege other than participation in national reconstruction; to those who want to construct something new and good, to become a part of the ZAPATISTA FRONT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

Those citizens without a party, those social and political organizations, those civic committees of dialogue, movements and groups, all those who do not aspire to take Power and who subscribe to this FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDON

JUNGLE commit themselves to participate in a dialogue to formulate its organic structure, its plan of action, and its declaration of principles for this ZAPATISTA FRONT OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

Today, this January 1 of 1996, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation signs this FOURTH DECLARATION OF THE LACANDON JUNGLE. We invite all the people of Mexico to subscribe to it.

### III

Brothers and Sisters::

Many words walk in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds are made for us. There are words and worlds which are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds which are truths and truthful. We make true words. We have been made from true words.

In the world of the powerful there is no space for anyone but themselves and their servants. In the world we want everyone fits.

In the world we want many worlds to fit. The Nation which we construct is one where all communities and languages fit, where all steps may walk, where all may have laughter, where all may live the dawn.

We speak of unity even when we are silent. Softly and gently we speak the words which find the unity which will embrace us in history and which will discard the abandonment which confronts and destroys one another.

Our word, our song and our cry, is so that the most dead will no longer die. So that we may live fighting, we may live singing.

Long live the word.

Long live Enough is Enough!

Long live the night which becomes a soldier in order not to die in oblivion. In order to live the word dies, its seed germinating forever in the womb of the earth. By being born and living we die. We will always live. Only those who give up their history are consigned to oblivion.

We are here.

We do not surrender.

Zapata is alive, and in spite of everything, the struggle continues.

From the mountains of the Mexican Southeast.

Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos

Indigenous Clandestine Revolutionary Committee General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation Mexico,

January of 1996

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